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THE MEMORIAL & PETITION
OF THE
PEOPLE OF RUPERT'S LAND
AND
NORTH-WEST TERRITORY, BRITISH AMERICA,
TO
His Excellency, U. S. Grant,
President of the United States.

To his Excellency U. S. GRANT,

President of the United States:

The memorial of the people of Rupert's Land and North-West, British North America.

They would most respectfully and earnestly represent unto your Excellency—

That in the year 1869 the Government of the Dominion of Canada made proposals to "the Governor and Company of Adventurers trading into Hudson's Bay," commonly called the "Hudson's Bay Company," to purchase their rights claimed to have been given to them, and to be held by them, under and by virtue of, a charter granted by Charles the II, King of England, in the year 1670.

That negotiations had continued between the Dominion Government and said company, into the month of March of the same year, (1869,) when the company agreed to transfer to the Dominion the lands, Government and people of the country, for, and in consideration of the sum of three hundred thousand pounds, (£300,000,) reserving to themselves, certain tracts of choice land and improvements thereon.

That this sale and purchase of said country, Government and people, were approved by the English Government, and were to have been ratified by Royal Proclamation.

That said negotiations were conducted and concluded, between the said Company and the Dominion of Canada, without either of them deeming it proper to consult, or even notify the people (your memorialists) of the proposed

transfer of the country to a Foreign Power and jurisdiction.

That pending the negotiations between the said parties, the Dominion Government sent its agents into our country, who commenced a road through the same without consulting the people of the country.

That the same Government, in the month of August, 1869, before the Proclamation of transfer was issued, sent a corps of surveyors, who, according to instructions, as follows: "You will confer with Governor McTavish, of the Hudson Bay Company, (*only*) who is able and will no doubt be glad, to give you advice and assistance in the performance of this important duty," commenced to survey our lands, without any regard to former surveys, anciently established landmarks, rights or claims whatever, but went forth marking off certain choice tracts of the land for themselves, and other Government officials and friends yet in Canada. This was done, too, by said surveyors, without any notice to the people of our country, without their consent, or any consultation with them whatever.

That the Dominion Parliament preceding the transfer, proceeded to organize a Government for our country, giving to the Governor who was to administer the same, unlimited power, and as the Governor himself termed it, "almost despotic," such as the power to rule personally, assisted by a council to be chosen by himself, consisting of Hudson Bay Company officers and Canadians; and thus your memorialists (the people) found their ancient surveys, land marks, boundaries and muniments of title, set at naught and disregarded, and a Government established over their heads, in the selection of the rulers and administration of which, they had no voice: and by this process they found that their homes, their country and their liberties, were held at the mercy of a foreign power and subject to a foreign jurisdiction.

Your memorialists seeing the agents of a foreign power swarming into our country, taking possession of it without

any authority from the people, cutting up our farms to suit their own views and purposes, seeing our people daily insulted, and hearing threats by these foreign officials of extermination, in order to make room for the "incoming intelligent man," Canadian.

That learning through the public press, our only medium, that we had been sold by a company of adventurers residing in London, England, with our lands, rights and liberties as so much merchandise to a foreign government; and further learning through the same medium, the press, that the Parliament of the Dominion of Canada had organized a Government for our country, as if it had jurisdiction over us, and that we were to have no voice in that Government, and that a Governor appointed to rule over us, clothed with "almost despotic power," had started from Canada en route to our country, accompanied by a band of unscrupulous and irresponsible followers, who were to form his Council, and fill other offices in the Government, and thus plunder and eat out our subsistence.

Learning these things, your memorialists became alarmed, and aroused to a sense of sacred duty, and following the maxim that "resistance to tyrants is obedience to God," called public meetings in the month of October, 1869, at which it was resolved, to repel their inroads by force if necessary, and this they found themselves compelled to do by a sense of self-preservation.

Accordingly, a "Committee of Safety," with full power and authority, to raise and equip an army to defend our country against that lawless invasion, of which Committee John Brice was chosen President and Lewis Riel Secretary.

The first movement of the committee was to expel the corps of surveyors from our lands, and a call to arms to drive back the coming Governor and his followers, was responded to, by more than six hundred men, within twenty-four hours.

That William McDougall, the appointed Lieut. Gover-

nor, was met at Pembina, on the boundary line, by a messenger from said Committee, with a written notice to him not to enter the country, without the consent of the people. Which notice, however, said McDougall wholly disregarded, and proceeded to establish himself at a Hudson's Bay Company Fort, from which he was driven the next day, to wit, the 2nd of November, 1869, and with his whole band of followers crossed the boundary line into American territory.

That the committee the day after expelling McDougall, took possession of Fort Garry, the seat of Government, without any resistance, and made it their Headquarters.

That an election of Delegates from all the Districts of the country was ordered, who should meet in Convention on the 16th day of the same month, (November,) "To consider the political state of the country, and adopt such measures as might be deemed necessary for the future welfare of our people."

That said order was responded to by every District, and the Convention, consisting of twenty-four members, met at the Court House, near Fort Garry, on the day appointed: and after due deliberation resolved, on the 24th day of the same month, (November,) to establish a Provisional Government as the choice of the people, and proclaimed the same on the 8th day of December, 1869: declaring said Provisional Government, to be the only rightful and lawful authority, for the Government of the country, commanding the respect and obedience of the people.

That the Provisional Government was the choice of the people, was recognized and obeyed by the superseded Governor, Wm. McTavish, and the Hudson's Bay Company, in the Territory. Also was recognized and treated with, by four different Commissioners sent to the country, by the Canadian Government.

That the said Wm. McDougall, while residing at Pembina, U. S. Territory, issued a proclamation on the 1st day of December, 1869, transferring our country to that of the

Dominion of Canada, and at the same time and place, plotted a scheme, to bring about a civil war in our country, and to accomplish which, he issued a second proclamation calling all loyal men to arms, and commissioning one Col. Dennis as his Lieutenant and conservator of the peace: empowering him, "to raise and equip an army, to arrest and disperse" our people, "to pull down, break up and destroy, all forts or strongholds in which unlawful assemblages of armed men, might be found in obedience to this command." Col. Dennis endeavored to raise an army; but his appeal was answered only by the surveying party, and a few of the road-making party, all Canadians, and about 200 Indians, making in the aggregate about 260 men.

That the Canadians established themselves in the house of one Dr. Shultz, but were all taken prisoners by the Provisional Government authorities, and Col. Dennis, who had garrisoned Lower Fort Garry with his Indian soldiers, was immediately abandoned, the savage fleeing for safety to his wigwam.

That it is well known that both McDougall and Dennis while residing at Pembina, U. S., had attempted to enlist American citizens, offering to arm and pay them, to fight against the authorities and people of the Provisional Government, that he also endeavored to enlist American Indians, to make war on our people, and also against the settlement of Pembina, U. S. Territory.

That McDougall also commissioned agents, while at Pembina, to incite the Indians of our territory, especially that band of Sioux murderers of Minnesota and Dakota massacre fame, to make war on our people, and such Commissions were duly honored by the Canadian Government, who paid the holders of them according to contract.

That the Canadian Government on being informed of the course we had taken, and of our willingness to adjust all difficulties on an equitable basis, sent Commissioners to the Provisional Government, who freely conceded that the policy of the Dominion Government had been wrong;

that it acted in ignorance of the true situation; that it strongly condemned the acts of its officials at Red River, who we feel assured, would have been applauded, had they succeeded in destroying the colony, devastating the country, subjugating our people, and establishing Canadian authority upon their ruins. They stated that they were authorized to ascertain upon what conditions we would enter into Confederation, and urged the Provisional Government to send delegates with specified conditions to Ottawa, whose expenses they would pay, and guarantee them personal safety. Upon these representations being made, the Provisional Government sent delegates to Ottawa with the terms upon which we would enter the Confederation.

That when our delegates stepped upon Canadian soil, two of the three were arrested, and thrown into a felon's prison, on the warrant of a Police Magistrate, and afterwards, were compelled to submit to a mock trial, unworthy of any civilized people. That the delegates were recognized and treated with, as those of the Provisional Government, and as the *de facto* Government of the country, both by Sir Clinton Murdoe, representing the English Government, and by the Dominion Government.

That negotiations were finally entered into with the Canadian Government, in which our delegates insisted upon the article contained in our "List of Rights," which called for a general and complete amnesty in these words :

"That none of the members of the Provisional Government, or any of those acting under them, be in any way held liable or responsible with regard to the movement, or any of the actions, which have led to the present negotiations."

And that unless such was first guaranteed, no conditions could or would be made. These conditions were accepted, and it was unconditionally agreed to by the Canadian Government, that whatever arrangements might be made, all would be null and void, unless a general and complete amnesty was first proclaimed.

That the negotiations to enter into the Confederation terminated in what is known as the "Manitoba Act."

That notwithstanding the pledges given for a general amnesty and other pacific measures, an armed expedition was fitted out and dispatched to our Territory, without any official notice having been sent to the Government or people as to its intent and purpose.

That on the first day of June, 1870, the Provisional Government issued a protest against this Expedition, and resolved to resist its entrance into our territory; and that Col. Wolsely, commanding the Expedition, issued a proclamation while on his march to Fort Garry, and which he had sent for circulation among our people; in which he declared, that his mission was one of peace and reconciliation, and called on the inhabitants to aid the Expedition, in its purposes and entrance into our territory.

That the United States Government forbade the passage of the Expedition through the Sault St. Mary Canal, in the State of Michigan, believing it to have been fitted out for hostile purposes against our Government and people, in order to coerce us into confederation.

That as we were led to believe, pledges were given to the American Government, to the effect that the Expedition was a peaceable one. That all the pledges made to our delegates and people would be faithfully fulfilled, by both the English and Dominion Governments, including particularly the general and complete amnesty, guaranteed as a "*sine qua non*."

That acting in good faith, and relying on the sincerity of the English and Dominion Governments, and their purpose to carry out the pledges given, through our delegates, and renewed by their Commissioner, Rt. Rev. Bishop Taché, and to the American Government in good faith, as we supposed; the Provisional Government placed no obstacle in the way of the Expedition, but on the contrary dispatched a member of the Government with a party to aid and facilitate its entrance into the country.

That this Expedition, contrary to the authorized proclamation of its commander, and in violation of all the pledges given to us and to the American Government, by the representative of the English and the Dominion Governments, did enter our country for warlike purposes, as was manifested by its actions in throwing out scouts, organizing an advanced corps, arresting all parties met with on their march to Fort Garry, among whom were three members of the Legislature, and more especially by Col. Wolsely's order to his men, to march upon the Fort, and take it by storm, which was done, and its surrender accomplished, by the soldiers and members of the Provisional Government evacuating it, upon the approach of the Expedition, thus acting in accordance with the arrangements concluded with the Dominion Government.

That the fall of Fort Garry did not satisfy this "peaceable Expedition." The members of the Provisional Government, especially Riel, O'Donoghue and Lepine, should be captured and sacrificed, to satisfy the blood-thirsty desire of these invaders, for no other crime than that they knew their rights and dared to defend them. The three mentioned had to flee for safety to American territory.

That Col. Wolsely, on the same day of the capture of Fort Garry, paid off his men, gave them three days license, thus letting them loose upon our people, whom they abused in their intoxication and disorder, in the most brutal manner.

That from the 24th day of September to the 17th of October following, there was no protection for life or property from these marauders, over whom their officers, equal to themselves, did not try to exercise control.

That, consequently, outrages upon our unoffending people were of hourly occurrence, especially upon any of them who were members of, or connected with, the Government of their choice.

One Elzior Goulet, an American citizen, while peaceably pursuing his avocation, was attacked by a band of these

marauders in uniform. He fled for safety towards Red River, which he attempted to swim across, but was closely pursued, and stoned to death while in the water, and his murderers are still unpunished.

That all the American citizens in the town of Winnipeg, law-abiding unquestionably, but naturally sympathizing with a people struggling in defense of the great principle of self-government, were treated in the most inhuman manner, and were forced to flee the country to Pembina, leaving in most instances their property behind.

And thus it will be seen, that, instead of observing in good faith, the solemn pledges of complete amnesty, of peaceful purposes, and kindly reconciliations, so often and so repeatedly made to our delegates and to our people, they proceeded to issue warrants for the arrest of Louis Riel, President; William B. O'Donoghue, Sec. and Treas., and Ambrose Lepine, Adjutant-General, and a price was set upon their heads, seeking thus to consummate their perfidious treachery, by the foul crime of murder.

That not a single pledge given by the English and Canadian Governments to our people, and to the Government of the United States, has been kept or performed, but on the contrary, each and every one as set forth in this memorial, has been ruthlessly and revengefully violated and trampled upon.

And we, the memorialists, for and in behalf of ourselves, and the people whom we represent, acting upon the highest principles of civil and religious liberty, in asserting the great and sacred principle of self-government, recognized throughout the civilized world as an inalienable right, have been thus, for these things, coerced into a confederation with Canada, under false representations, broken promises, and violated pledges, and are left alone for a redress of our grievances, to an appeal to the Government of the United States, whose honor, and plighted faith, as we humbly and earnestly maintain, are both solemnly pledged to see us righted.

That against such unwarranted outrages and unpardonable perfidy, we do hereby, in the name of justice, and in the face of the civilized world, solemnly protest, and earnestly ask your Excellency, the President of the United States, to cause an investigation to be made into the extent and nature of our grievances, the pledges given to us and to your Government, and the extent to which those pledges have been violated, and to demand, in our behalf, that full reparation be made for all these violated pledges, and the injury and damages resulting to us therefrom.

That impelled by a universal desire to be permitted peacefully to enjoy a Government of our own choosing, or to change our allegiance for political and commercial reasons to some other Government of our choice, and being thoroughly satisfied that neither peace nor prosperity can exist in our country, under a Government which has by its bad faith, forfeited all claim upon the confidence of our people, and has instituted a war of extermination against us; and considering further the vast extent of barren and impassible territory, that separates us from the Dominion of Canada, we again earnestly appeal to your Excellency for the foregoing reasons, and many others which might be urged, to intercede in our behalf, and to take all such steps as your Excellency may deem appropriate and proper, to enable us to enjoy the blessings of life, liberty, property, and the pursuit of happiness, under a Government of our own choice, or in union with a people, with whom we may think that we can enjoy these blessings.

In concluding this memorial, we beg leave to subjoin a brief extract from the speech of the Governor-General of Canada, in proroguing the Parliament after the passage of the "Manitoba Act," in reference to the Expedition, and the expectations which our people were naturally led to entertain; the Governor-General proceeded as follows:

"The just and reasonable conditions which you have sanctioned in favor of the inhabitants, Manitoba—cannot fail to remove every trace of misapprehension which

unhappily existed, and would place, instead, a feeling of confidence in your good will, and increasing advantages to be derived from joining the Dominion. The military which it is necessary to send, will gratify and give confidence to all loyal and well-disposed persons. *Her Majesty's troops go forth on an errand of peace, and will serve as an assurance to the inhabitants of Red River Settlement, and the numerous Indian tribes, that occupy the North-West, that they have a place in the regard and Council of England, and may rely upon the impartial protection of the English Empire."*

Done at Red River, this 3d day of October, 1870, by the authority of the people.